

noaa restoration

ERA

Estuary Restoration Act

NOAA is implementing the Estuary Restoration Act by...

- ☞ *Developing a national database of acres restored and restoration techniques;*
- ☞ *Establishing monitoring protocols for restoration projects;*
- ☞ *Providing funding and technical assistance for regional restoration planning; and*
- ☞ *Coordinating with other agencies to focus restoration efforts.*



<http://restoration.noaa.gov>

ENACTED IN NOVEMBER 2000, THE ESTUARY RESTORATION ACT STRIVES TO RESTORE ONE MILLION ACRES OF ESTUARINE HABITAT BY LEVERAGING LIMITED FEDERAL RESOURCES TO ENCOURAGE COORDINATION AMONG PUBLIC AGENCIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. IN SUPPORT OF THIS OBJECTIVE, NOAA HAS DEVELOPED A NATIONAL INVENTORY OF ESTUARY RESTORATION PROJECTS AND HAS ESTABLISHED MONITORING PROTOCOLS FOR GAUGING RESTORATION SUCCESS. AS A MEMBER OF THE INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING THE ERA, NOAA IS ALSO COORDINATING RESTORATION ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES, PROVIDING ASSISTANCE FOR REGIONAL RESTORATION PLANNING EFFORTS, ASSESSING HABITAT TRENDS, EVALUATING RESTORATION TECHNIQUES, AND FOSTERING THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR RESTORATION AND MONITORING.

HIGHLIGHT

Working with Partners to Share Restoration Information

The primary purpose of the National Estuary Restoration Inventory (NERI) is to improve the long-term effectiveness of restoration projects by providing the restoration community with the information it needs to evaluate the relative success of different restoration approaches. This kind of data is valuable for local and regional restoration programs, which often lack sufficient resources to track the results of their efforts.

NOAA is now working with the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment to assemble an inventory of regional restoration projects using NERI. With seed money and technical support from NOAA, the council is designing a regional web site that provides detailed information about local restoration projects. As part of NERI, the Gulf of Maine inventory will benefit from advanced web-based features, including query capabilities, dynamic project profiles, and an interactive mapping application. The Gulf of Maine Council will be able to flag regional projects in the national inventory, so that information on these projects can be accessed

and queried from the Gulf of Maine web site. At the same time, NOAA will be able to provide detailed project information from the Gulf of Maine to a national audience, along with information on other restoration projects from throughout the country.

The Gulf of Maine inventory is only a start—NOAA is also partnering with the Gulf of Mexico Foundation and is working with other federal, regional and state programs to populate NERI with additional project information. The national inventory will be accessible for on-line project entry and data queries in February 2004. Look for it at:

<http://neri.noaa.gov>

For more information on working with NOAA to incorporate your restoration projects into NERI, or to develop a NERI-integrated state or regional project inventory, contact:

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HIGHLIGHT

Assessing Habitat Trends to Prioritize Restoration Activities

Healthy estuaries depend on a complex mix of habitats, including various types of wetlands, oyster reefs, submerged aquatic vegetation, and even upstream riparian forests. As these habitats are lost or degraded, the individual functions that each provides within the local ecosystem are also lost. Over the last century, millions of acres of critical habitats have been destroyed. But how much has been lost? To successfully restore our nation's estuaries, we must identify not only the total area and geographic extent of each type of estuarine habitat existing today, but also (to the extent feasible) the historic distribution and extent of estuarine habitats.

NOAA is working with other ERA Council agencies to collect and evaluate information on current and historic coverage of estuarine and associated ecosystems, specifically:

- *Freshwater marsh*
- *Salt marsh*
- *Submerged aquatic vegetation*
- *Kelp bed/forest*
- *Shrub swamp (including mangroves)*
- *Forested wetland*
- *Shellfish reef*
- *Coral reef*
- *Beach*
- *Dunes*
- *Mudflat/intertidal flat*

- *Hard bottom*
- *Soft bottom*
- *Coastal grassland*
- *Maritime forest*
- *Riparian forest*
- *Tidal river/stream (including fish passage data)*

A comprehensive dataset on the status and trends of estuarine habitats will provide critical information to guide strategic restoration planning and policy-making at the national level, and will help local groups target limited resources toward restoration of the most threatened habitats in their regions.

*NOAA is interested in receiving information about state and regional trends for the above-listed habitats, as well as data on armored shorelines. For more information, contact: **Amy.Zimmerling@noaa.gov**.*